

## Some Possible Variables in Making Writing Assignments

As I mentioned above, there are many different “slots” or variables that you can specify in an assignment, and by adjusting these, you can generate a wide variety of assignments. The variables you specify will also determine your evaluation standards and influence the kinds of guidance you give students in process.

<p><b>Topic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open</li> <li>General subject field (topic area)</li> <li>Specific topic</li> <li>Specific position on topic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Readership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher</li> <li>peers</li> <li>hypothetical or real individual</li> <li>general public audience</li> <li>specific audience (interest group, etc.)</li> <li>specific academic or professional audience, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student</li> <li>collaborator/colleague</li> <li>professional</li> <li>peer</li> <li>expert</li> <li>employee</li> <li>citizen</li> <li>interest group member</li> <li>official</li> </ul>	<p><b>Genre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>memo; letter</li> <li>journal entry; log; lab notebook</li> <li>ethnographic notes</li> <li>report of information; of observations; of event response; blog entry—about readings? Events?</li> <li>article; essay</li> <li>case study; treatment plan</li> <li>research paper: primary sources? Secondary?</li> <li>short answer/microtheme</li> <li>class notes; summary</li> <li>poster; brochure</li> <li>class posting on a discussion board</li> <li>podcast; film</li> <li>PowerPoint; Web page</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate knowledge</li> <li>organize materials</li> <li>analyze, draw inferences and conclusions</li> <li>synthesize</li> <li>critique</li> <li>argue a position or policy</li> <li>explore or reflect</li> <li>connect new knowledge to old or to experience</li> <li>interpret</li> </ul>	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Format</li> <li>Length</li> <li>Citation style, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal experience or opinion</li> <li>Texts or artifacts<sup>1</sup> that students find</li> <li>Texts or artifacts that instructor specifies</li> <li>Data<sup>2</sup> provided by instructor</li> <li>Data created by student(s)</li> </ul> <p><sup>1</sup>Writings, images, objects, etc.  <sup>2</sup>Observations, measures, statistics, etc.</p>	